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ABSTRACT

This document reports on the findings of the Fiscal Year (FY) 1992 evaluation of the Illinois Prekindergarten Program for Children At Risk of Academic Failure, initiated in 1985 through a statute authorizing the State Board of Education to implement and administer a grant program to public school districts to conduct preschool education programs for children ages 3 to 5 who were academically at risk. Findings indicate, among other things, that statewide, 262 project sites received state funds to serve children in 496 school districts in 1992, an 11 percent increase in the number of funded projects over 1991. It was also shown that: the number of children participating in funded programs increased 22 percent from 1991 to 1992, while the total program budget rose 13 percent, to $71.5 million; that statewide, 26 percent of participating children were ranked by their teachers as above average and 48 percent as average in their kindergarten readiness skills; and that 79 percent of the children whose parents participated in 4 or more school readiness activities were ranked above average or average in kindergarten readiness skills, compared to 65 percent whose parents participated in 2 or fewer of these activities. Besides reporting on these and other findings, the document also describes the evaluation design and limitations, the nature of the program, and the ethnic and socioeconomic characteristics of the children served, as well as providing a financial summary. Four appendixes provide: (1) a policy statement on early childhood education; (2) a copy of the school code of Illinois applicable to the Prekindergarten Program; (3) two supplemental data tables and two figures, including a map of Illinois indicating the number of at-risk children in each county; and (4) a list of four references. (MDM)

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ILLINOIS PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN AT RISK OF ACADEMIC FAILURE FY 92 SUMMARY REPORT

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Department of Planning, Research and Evaluation

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FOREWORD

This document presents a summary and analysis of the annual evaluation data obtained from school districts participating in the Illinois Prekindergarten At Risk Program for the 1991-92 school year.

For further information concerning this report, please contact Kalpana Desai, Department of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Illinois State Board of Education at 217/782-3950.

The interpretations and conclusions expressed herein have been prepared by staff and do not necessarily reflect the position or the policy of the Illinois State Board of Education.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Illinois Prekindergarten Program for Children At Risk of Academic Failure was authorized in 1985 through Section 2-3.71 of the School Code. The statute authorized the State Board of Education to implement and administer a grant program to public school districts to conduct preschool education programs for children ages 3 to 5 who are at risk of academic failure.

The following are highlights of the findings from the FY 92 evaluation:

- Statewide, 262 project sites received state funds to serve children in 496 districts; a 11% increase compared to FY 91 funded projects (236).
- The number of children participating in FY 92 was 29,707; a 22% increase from 24,356 in FY 91, a 59% increase from 18,660 in FY 90; and a 327% increase from 6953 in FY 87.
- The state allocation for the prekindergarten at-risk program was $71.5 million. This is a 13% increase from the FY 91 allocation of $63 million.
- The average cost per child increased from $2,182 in FY 91 to $2,370 in FY 92. The average state cost per child in FY 87 was $1,827.
- Statewide, 26% of the children were ranked by their teachers as above average and 48% as average in their kindergarten readiness skills. These percentages have gradually increased since the program's beginning from 18% and 38% respectively in FY 87.
- The sustained effects study indicates a majority (75-80%) of children are ranked by their teachers as above average or average in performance across different instructional areas through the third grade. The retention rate of these children was only 3%.
- The ethnic composition of children receiving prekindergarten services was 47% white, 31% black, 19% Hispanic, 3% Asian and 1% American Indian and other. This ratio has not significantly changed since FY 87.
- In FY 92, 66% of the participating children were eligible for free lunch, compared to 68% in FY 91 and 76% in FY 87.
- In FY 92, 28% of the children served were from single-parent homes, and 2% were living with adults other than their parents, compared to 32% and 4% respectively in FY 91.
- The percent of teachers holding Early Childhood certificates also increased from 55% in FY 91 to 60% in FY 92.
- On average, children attended 122 days with 12 hours of classroom instruction each week.
- Ninety-six percent of the parents were reported to be involved in their children's prekindergarten experiences. Almost 67% of these parents were involved in two or more parent involvement activities. Seventy-nine percent of the children whose parents participated in four or more activities were ranked above average or average in kindergarten readiness skills, compared to 65% whose parents participated in two or less. This trend has been observed since the beginning of the program.

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INTRODUCTION

On May 9, 1985, the State Board of Education adopted a policy statement on early childhood education. Legislation enacted in 1985 authorized the State Board of Education to administer a new grant program which enabled school districts to operate prekindergarten programs for children aged 3 to 5 years old. The statute (Sec. 2-3.71, of the School Code) identified the eligible population to be served in this program as "children who were at risk of academic failure because of their home and community environment." (See Appendix A for a copy of the Board's policy statement and Appendix B for a copy of the statute.)

According to the Act, "Funds shall be distributed for the benefit of children who, because of their home and community environment, are subject to such language, cultural, economic and like disadvantages that they have been determined, as a result of screening procedures, to be at risk of academic failure."

Research indicates a disproportionate share of at-risk children come from poor families where English is not spoken as the primary language in the home, or have parent(s) who either are teenagers or have not yet completed high school. Children at-risk may also include children who were born prematurely or who had a low birth weight; these children may be developmentally delayed neurologically, but are not physically disabled.

The procedures used to identify children who are at risk of academic failure are based on the results from individual screening and assessment and are not determined by an individual's membership in a given group or the characteristics of their family.

EVALUATION DESIGN AND LIMITATIONS

This report is based on information collected from each project at the end of the school year by the following data collection instruments:

- Prekindergarten Program Record - collects information regarding program characteristics;
- Prekindergarten Student Record - collects information regarding the characteristics of students served, their status and performance; and
- Prekindergarten Follow-up Report - collects information to measure performance of children in succeeding school years.

Limitations

This evaluation report describes program and participant characteristics and presents information about a number of program variables linked to participant performance. Inferences about causal relationships are not intended, and assumptions about linking program services to participant outcomes should be made with caution.

Factors which limit the ability to generalize the evaluation's results to all projects and participants across the state include the following:

- Individual projects are required to establish their own eligibility criteria and methods for screening based on local needs. There exists no single uniform eligibility standard or screening system applied to all age-appropriate populations.
- The program requires that all participants' performance be ranked above average, average, below average or deficient. No single standardized assessment instrument is applied statewide. Final rankings are based on subjective judgments influenced by locally defined performance standards and assessment practices.
- Statewide variations in population characteristics and related needs influence project characteristics. The character of the program's services at each project may differ from project to project as a result of program designs tailored to community needs.

However, the data collected and the subsequent evaluation help identify factors that seem to be related to performance and provide a partial explanation of how students are responding to prekindergarten experiences. The next sections deal with the findings from these data.

PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM IN ILLINOIS

The Illinois General Assembly appropriated $71.5 million dollars for the Prekindergarten At-Risk program for Fiscal 1992. With the appropriation, the Illinois State Board of Education funded 262 prekindergarten projects. These projects served a total of 496 districts in FY 92, compared to 232 in FY 86 and 475 in FY 91. School districts served 29,707 at-risk children in the regular school year and 5,055 in the summer, from a total of 67,388 children screened. Table 1 profiles program participation for FY 86 through FY 92.

Table 1. The Prekindergarten Program in Illinois

	FY 86	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92
Number of Projects	100	94	94	135	184	236	262
Number of Participating Districts	232	202	178	279	353	475	496
Percentage Change in Districts Each Year	-	(15%)	(13%)	57%	27%	35%	4%
Number of Joint Agreements	NA	15	18	22	27	37	41
Number of Children Screened	24,340	26,749	23,993	32,161	45,770	57,482	67,388
Number of Children Enrolled	5,471	6,953	7,030	10,792	18,660	24,356	29,707
Percentage Increase in Children Enrolled Each Year	-	29%	1%	54%	73%	31%	22%
Appropriation (in Millions)	$12.1[a]	$12.7	$12.7	$23.9	$48	$63	$71.5
Percentage Increase in Appropriation Each Year	-	5%	0%	88%	101%	31%	13%

[a]The FY 86 appropriation was divided between screening ($3.1 million) and program delivery ($9.0 million). Funding for 1986 was from January to June.

The 12% increase in funds enabled programs to serve 22% more children (from 24,356 in FY 91 to 29,707 in FY 92).

Table 2 displays the number of children who received services and the number who were eligible but did not receive services in three categories: statewide, downstate, and Chicago.

Table 2. Number of Children Participating in FY 92

	Downstate	Chicago	Statewide
Children Enrolled	18,853	10,854	29,707
Children Participating in Their Second Year of the Program	4,216	2,341	6,557
Total Number of Children Enrolled During the Summer	1,655	3,400	5,055
Number of Children Who Participated Only in the Summer Program	363	0	363
Eligible after Screening, but Not Enrolled	5,394	1,743	7,137

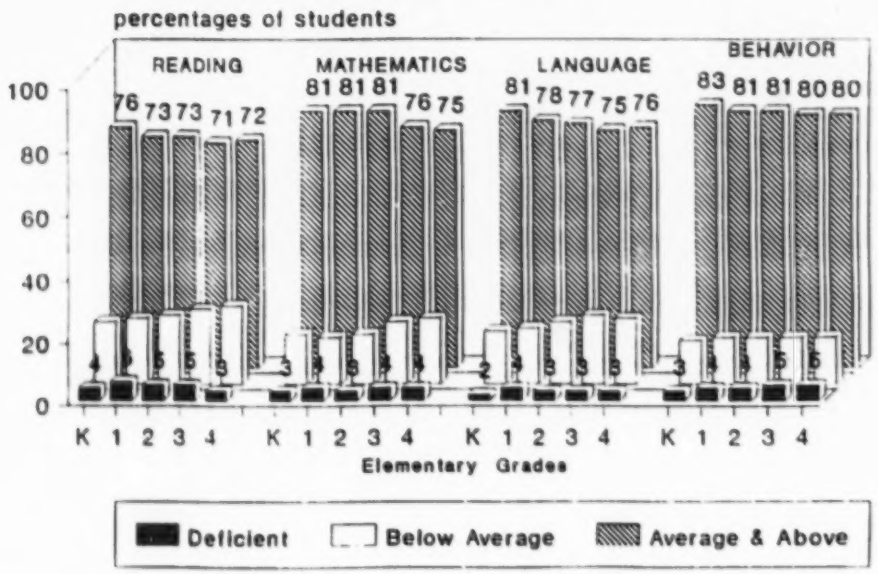
SUCCESS IN ELEMENTARY GRADES LONGITUDINAL STUDY: SUSTAINED EFFECTS

The Illinois Prekindergarten At-Risk Program is designed to provide early childhood experiences to enhance growth and development of participants to assure a reasonable chance for academic success in school. To determine the success of the program, data are annually collected and reported on all children who have participated in the program. The teachers in elementary grades were asked to rank children who participated in the prekindergarten program on their academic performance in reading, mathematics, language and behavior. The four performance categories were above average, average, below average, and deficient.

Statewide, at the end of school year 1991-1992, 71 to 76% of the students who attended a prekindergarten at-risk program were ranked as above average or average from kindergarten (76%) to fourth grade (72%) in three instructional areas, with reading being weakest (76% - 72%) and mathematics the strongest (81% - 75%). The behavior of about 80% of the children was judged as above average or average in kindergarten through fourth grade. (See Table 11 in Appendix C.)

The performance of students by grade is also indicated in Figure 1. **The percentage of children in the below average category from kindergarten to fourth grade has been steadily increasing from 20 to 25% in reading and 16 to 21% in mathematics,** while the percentage of children in the deficient category remains about the same (3 to 5%).

FIGURE 1
FY 92 ASSESSMENT OF PREKINDERGARTEN CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY GRADES



The promotion rate was another variable used to determine program success. In FY 92, 97% of all children who had participated in the prekindergarten program were promoted to the next grade. As Table 3 reveals, the percentage of children advanced to the next grade decreased from kindergarten (81%) to first grade through third grade (75 - 74%) but increased in fourth grade (78%). The percentage of children advanced to the next grade with supplemental services also shows the same trend. The retention rate of these children has decreased from 3% in the first grade to only 1% in the fourth.

Table 3. FY 93 Recommended Placement by Elementary Grades

Placement 1992-93	Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade	Fourth Grade
Advance to Next Regular Grade	80.7%	75.4%	75.2%	73.5%	78.0%
Advance to Next Grade with Supplemental Services	10.3%	14.9%	15.3%	17.1%	13.2%
Advance to Next Grade with Special Education Services	3.1%	4.6%	6.2%	6.3%	6.2%
Advance to Transition Class	1.5%	--	--	--	-
Refer for Special Education Placement	0.9%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%	1.3%
Bilingual Self-contained	1.0%	0.6%	0.5%	0.7%	0.1%
Retention	2.5%	3.2%	1.7%	1.3%	1.2%
Unknown*	(0.8%)	(0.5%)	(0.0)	(0.4)	(0.1)

Note: Percentages were calculated without including unknown.
* Percent of total children.

The results of the longitudinal study in FY 89 and FY 90 reflected similar patterns. Considering the fact that children in the program were identified as potentially at risk of academic failure, a more than 98% success rate reflects positively on the program's effectiveness.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN SERVED

Research has shown that environmental background plays a major role in academic success or failure. To evaluate the characteristics of the children served, projects are asked to report information on each child's ethnicity, family structure, health, primary language, free-lunch status and any previous preschool experiences. At the end of the prekindergarten program, teachers are asked to rank each child's readiness for kindergarten according to a four-category scale: above average, average, below average, and deficient. These rankings are based on teacher judgment influenced by local assessment practices. In aggregate, some factors appear to be associated with participant success.

Family Structure

Statewide, about two thirds (63%) of the children served came from homes where both parents are present. In Chicago, where family structure was known (39% unknown), slightly more than half (52%) of the children served came from single-parent families compared to 28% for regions outside Chicago. This ratio has remained the same from FY 86 through FY 92.

Data indicate that overall, children from homes with both parents present were ranked higher than children from other family structures. Almost 76% were ranked as above average or average compared to 72% of the children from single-parent families (see Table 4).

Table 4. Readiness Level by Family Structure

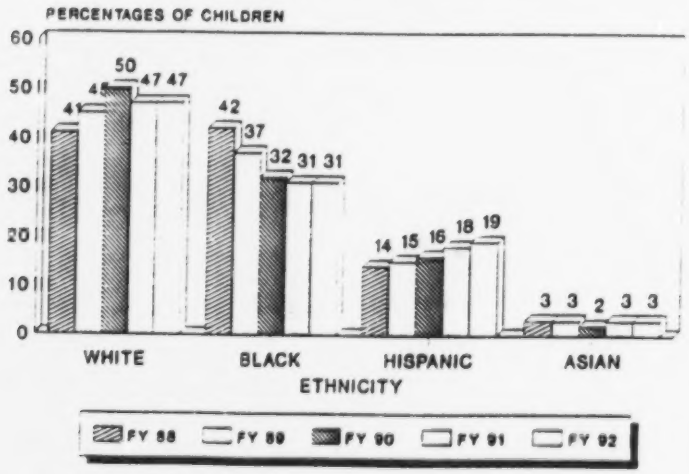
Readiness Level	Both Parents	Single Parent	Adult Other Than Parent	Other
Above Average	24.0%	25.3%	19.1%	20.2%
Average	52.2%	46.3%	51.9%	49.5%
Below Average	17.2%	20.4%	19.6%	23.0%
Deficient	6.6%	8.0%	9.4%	7.3%
Total Number of Children	9363	4444	341	287

Racial/Ethnic Breakdown

In FY 92, more than half the children (53%) served were from a minority group. About 47% of the children were white; 31% black; 19% Hispanic; and 3% Asian. "Other," including American Indians, accounted for less than one percent. Statewide, the program's ethnic and racial configuration has changed very little since FY 87 (Figure 2). There have been slight fluctuations in the percent of black and white children who have been served, 30-40% black and 40-50% white, and each year the percent of Hispanic children has gradually increased (13% in FY 87 to 19% in FY 92).

There is a great deal of difference in the make-up of ethnic and racial percentages of children served in Chicago compared with the rest of the state (Figure 2). Most of the children served in Chicago are black (48%) and Hispanic (37%), while the downstate program served 21% black and 9% Hispanic. The ethnic distribution of children served in the downstate projects has remained the same over the years, while in Chicago the percentage of Hispanic children increased (22% in FY 87 to 37% in FY 92) and the percentage of black children decreased (70% to 48%).

FIGURE 2
RACIAL/ETHNIC BREAKDOWN



The statewide performance ranking of children by different ethnic/racial backgrounds is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Readiness Level by Ethnicity

Readiness Level	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian	Other
Above Average	23.1%	28.0%	28.1%	34.9%	21.2%	20.4%
Average	54.4%	42.1%	41.9%	43.7%	60.6%	54.9%
Below Average	17.0%	19.3%	19.9%	16.1%	12.1%	20.4%
Deficient	5.5%	10.6%	10.1%	5.3%	6.1%	4.2%
Total Number of Children	8,056	4,881	3,446	416	33	142

Family Income Level

The program served a substantial number of children eligible for free and/or reduced-price lunch. The criteria for determining eligibility is based on family income. Since most programs operate only half days and do not offer meals, 33% of downstate and 3% of Chicago children's lunch status was unknown in FY 92. Statewide, for children whose lunch status was known, about 66% of the children served were eligible for free lunch and another 9% were eligible for reduced-price lunch. These FY 92 figures are about the same as in FY 91 and FY 90. In FY 89 and before, 75% of the children were eligible for free lunch with about 8-9% eligible for reduced-price lunch. (See figure 3.) As Table 6 reveals, about 84% of the children served in Chicago were eligible for free lunch, compared to 51% of downstate children.

Table 6. Lunch Status of Children Served in Prekindergarten Program by Downstate and Chicago

	Downstate			Chicago		
Lunch Status	FY 90 %	FY 91 %	FY 92 %	FY 90 %	FY 91 %	FY 92 %
Free Lunch	26 (56)	48 (68)	34 (51)	73 (81)	80 (82)	82 (84)
Reduced-Price	4 (10)	6 (8)	7 (11)	7 (8)	7 (7)	7 (7)
Not Eligible	15 (34)	17 (24)	26 (38)	11 (11)	10 (11)	9 (9)
Unknown	55 -	29 -	33 -	10 -	3 -	3 -
Total	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)		

Percentages in parentheses are calculated without including the unknown.

Family income seems to have some effect on performance rankings. As Figure 4 reveals, only 70% of the children who were eligible for free lunch performed at above average or average levels in kindergarten readiness skills, compared to 81% of the children who were not eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. This difference in performance is comparable statewide, with both Chicago and downstate areas showing similar patterns.

FIGURE 3
LUNCH STATUS

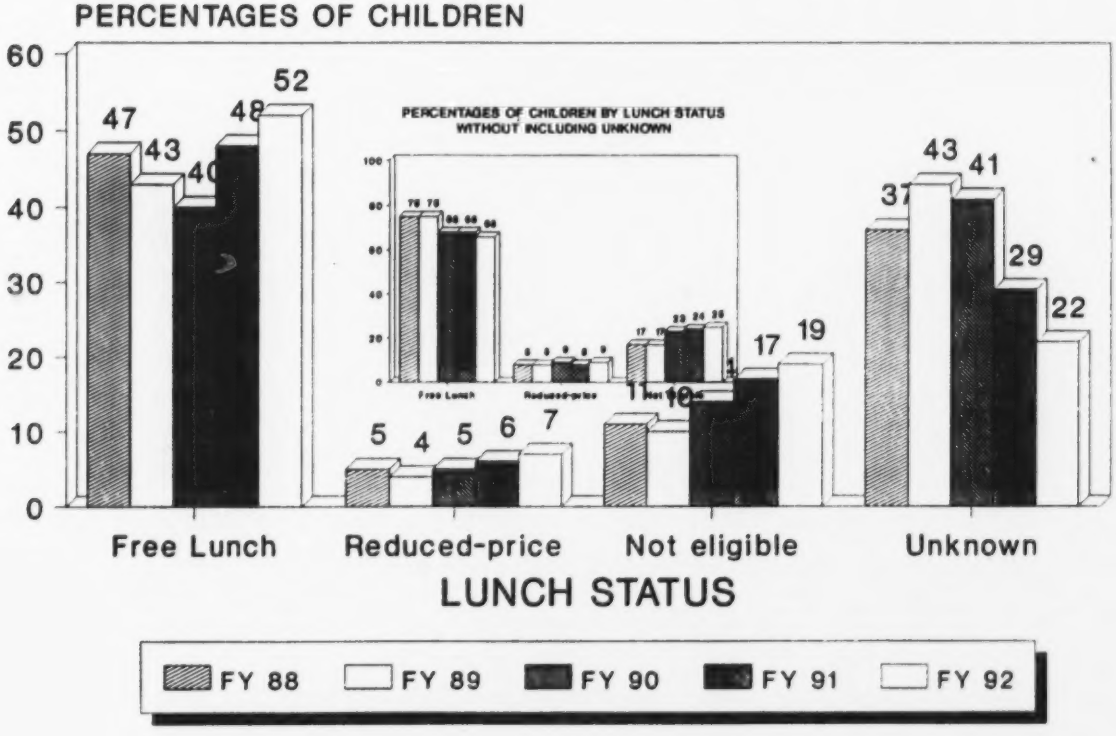
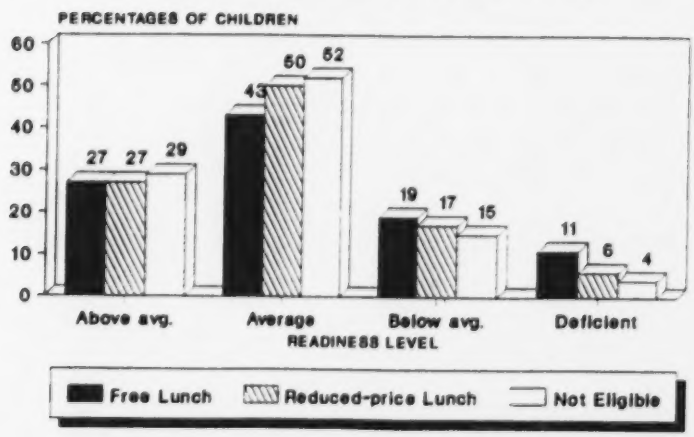


FIGURE 4
CHILDREN'S READINESS LEVEL
BY SCHOOL LUNCH STATUS IN FY 92



Previous Program Experience

Approximately two-thirds (63%) of the children identified as at-risk and enrolled in the program had no previous preschool experience. Table 7 identifies the percentage of children in the programs who have had previous preschool experience. These percentages have remained about the same from previous years. The number of children with two years of participation increased from 21% to 23.5% in FY 92.

Table 7. Percentage of Children Served in the Prekindergarten Program Who Had Other Preschool Experience

	% of Children			
Previous Preschool Experience	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92
None	63.0	62.2	65.1	62.8
Private Sector	6.6	6.5	6.5	6.4
Prevention Initiative	-	-	-	0.6
Chapter 1	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.04
Early Intervention	-	-	-	0.3
Special Education	1.2	1.0	0.9	0.8
Head Start	3.1	2.5	2.6	2.5
Other State Programs	1.0	1.0	1.7	0.7
Other Preschool	2.2	1.9	2.2	3.0
2nd Year of PreK "At-Risk"	16.5	16.1	21.2	23.5
Unknown	6.2	9.0	15.8	17.5
Total Number of Children	10,455	17,176	23,372	27,269

Note: The percentages do not total 100% because some children attended more than one program and were counted twice.

Children who had previous preschool experience were ranked slightly higher in their readiness levels than children who did not. Table 8 reveals that 29% of the children who participated two years in the prekindergarten at-risk program were assessed as above average, compared to 27% with other preschool program experience and 23% with no previous experience.

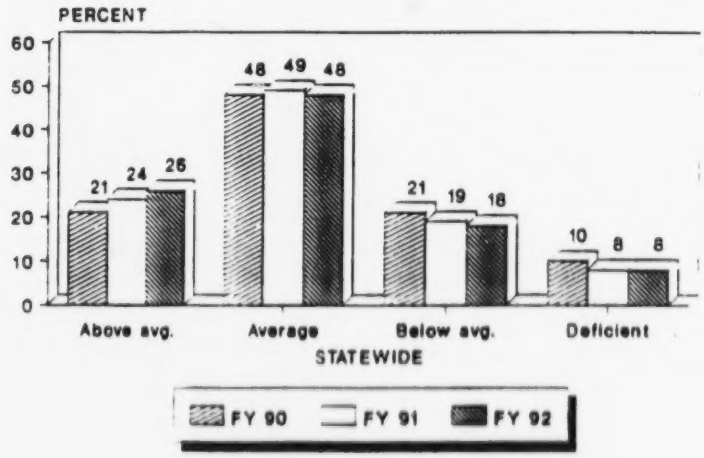
Table 8. Readiness Level of Children by Their Previous Preschool Experience

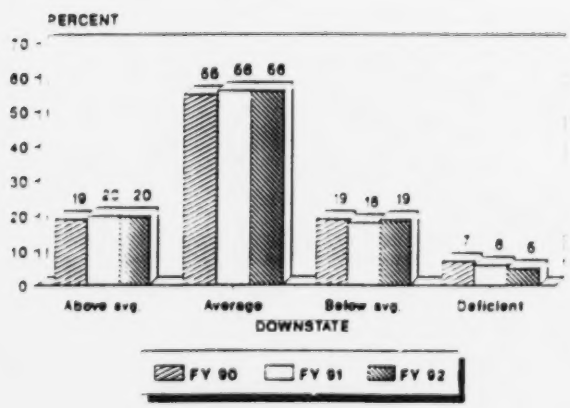
Readiness Level	No Experience	Other Program Experience	Two Years of Participation in the Prekindergarten Program
Above Average	22.6%	26.9%	29.1%
Average	49.0%	43.8%	49.8%
Below Average	20.3%	18.4%	15.5%
Deficient	8.1%	10.9%	5.6%

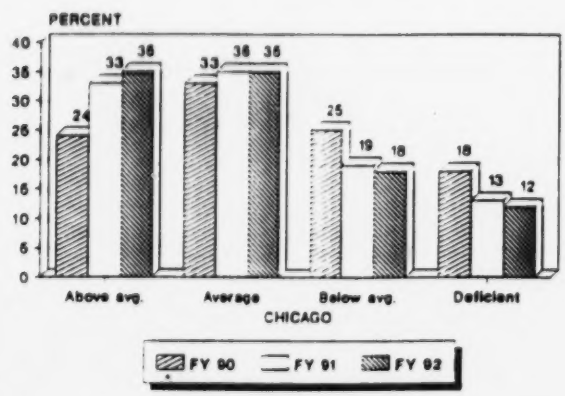
The Overall Success of Prekindergarten Children

One measure of success for the program is determined by ranking the level of kindergarten readiness of all participating children at the end of the prekindergarten program. In FY 92, about 74% were ranked as above average or average. From the program's beginning, these percentages have increased slightly every year. In FY 88 and FY 89, 66% of the children were ranked as above average or average compared to 69% in FY 90 and 73% in FY 91. (See Figure 5.) Figure 5 also displays separately the performance of children from Chicago and downstate. It should be noted that this difference could be the result of different assessment instruments and performance criteria.

FIGURE 5
PREKINDERGARTEN CHILDREN
BY READINESS LEVEL







FINANCIAL SUMMARY

In FY 92, the state appropriated $71.5 million for the program, almost four times (462% increase) the $12.7 million appropriation in FY 87. In FY 92, separate data were collected at the local district level on direct and in-kind contributions. Besides the $70,429,106 grant from the state prekindergarten fund, districts reported that a total of $1,593,816 were contributed directly to the program from local school district budgets and another $356,713 were contributed from other state and private resources. The FY 92 total direct expenditure was $72,379,635. Districts also estimated that $3,204,661 were in-kind contributions, making the amount of $75,584,297 available to the program either by direct or indirect contribution.

In FY 90, almost 56% of the expenditure went to pay instructional salaries and benefits, compared to 52% in FY 91, 54% in FY 90, 56% in FY 89 and 61% in FY 88. Figure 6 displays the percentages of state fund expenditure by services. Other major expenditures were 7.6% for guidance, speech and audio and health services, 6.6% for instructional material and equipment, 7% for community services and 5.4% for transportation.

These percentages are calculated from state funds only and are about the same as reported in FY 88 and FY 89. (See Table 12 in Appendix C for detailed expenditures breakdown by each service.)

In FY 92, about 41 projects served children during the summer. The average cost per child, calculated by prorating the summer enrollment for the FY 92 school year, was $2,243, an increase from $2,182 in FY 91 and $2,124 in FY 90. The average state cost per child was $2,209 in FY 89 and $1,800 in FY 88.

FIGURE 6
STATE FUND EXPENDITURE
BY SERVICES

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

The unique characteristic of the Illinois program is its recognition of the potential for different needs from different demographic areas. The program allows districts to develop their own individual and unique at-risk programs and continue to operate within the State Board of Education's guidelines (see Appendix A). The Illinois State Board of Education collects information from each project to answer the following questions:

- What kinds of instructional settings (classroom, home-based, hours per week, locations, etc.) characterize the Illinois prekindergarten program?
- What types of certification do prekindergarten teachers hold?
- What is the teacher-child ratio?
- What other agencies are involved in the program? What services do these agencies provide?
- What level of parent involvement is found in local programs?

Eligibility Criteria

Projects are required to establish the criteria by which students will be determined to be at risk of academic failure and develop procedures that address fine and gross motor skills, cognitive development, visual motor integration, language and speech development, vocabulary, English proficiency and social competence.

In FY 92, almost one-third of the projects (35%) used the DIAL (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning) test as their primary screening tool. About 17% of the projects used Chicago EARLY as their screening instrument. Comprehensive Identification Process and the Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development were used by 11% and 10% of the projects respectively. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Revised (PPVT-R) was the major secondary screening tool used by almost 20% of the projects.

Instructional Settings

A project can offer different instructional settings depending upon available resources and needs of children. In FY 92, the 262 projects offered 332 different types of program services. About 83% of the projects serving 94% of the children were classroom-based. About 5% of the children were served through a combination of classroom and home-based instruction, and 1.4% of the children were served in only home-based settings. The remaining were served by "other types" of instruction. "Other types" of instruction include receiving services while attending a day care program, or being served by prekindergarten staff at another site in the community (usually less than 2 hours a week). These percentages have remained about the same over the last three years.

Eighty-four percent of children receiving services in only classroom settings attended projects offering 9 to 14 hours a week of instruction. Statewide, only 4.2% of the children were served in a full-day classroom environment. In Chicago, 6.2% of the children were served in a full-day classroom-based setting.

Characteristics of Educational Staff

The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers increased 18.5% from 831.2 in FY 91 to 985.0 in FY 92. The percent of teachers holding Early Childhood Education Certificates (ECE) also increased from 55% in FY 91 to 60% in FY 92, and the percentage of teachers holding an elementary certificate with experience in kindergarten or preschool decreased from 37% to 34%. The percent of teachers having Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) qualifications remained the same at 4% in FY 91 (see Table 9).

Table 9 indicates the percentages of children served by categories of teacher certification. While the total number of children served increased (22%), the percentage of children served by teachers with ECE certification increased from 58% in FY 91 to 62% in FY 92.

Table 9. Number and Percent of Prekindergarten Staff by Categories of Certification and Percent of Children Served by Each Category

Certification	FTE Teachers						Students Served		
	FY 90		FY 91		FY 92		FY 90	FY 91	FY 92
	#	%	#	%	#	%	%	%	%
ECE Certified	388.2	57.8	455.5	54.8	591.7	60.1	61.9	57.6	62.4
Elementary Certificate with Experience	217.1	32.3	310.0	37.3	340.2	34.5	30.3	37.4	27.8
Baccalaureate Degree in Child Development	18.5	2.8	31.5	3.8	17.1	1.7	1.9	1.8	6.6
DCFS Qualified	47.5	7.1	34.2	4.1	36.0	3.7	5.9	3.2	3.3
Total FTE Teachers	671.3	100.0	831.2	100.0	985.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Teacher-Child Ratio

The teacher-child ratio in the largest class was 1 to 13, and the teacher's aide-child ratio was 1 to 14.5. The adult-child ratio (teacher and teacher's aide) in the largest class was 1 to 7 the same as in FY 91. The adult-child ratio required by rules and regulations of the Illinois prekindergarten program is one adult to 10 children with no more than 20 children in each classroom.

Collaboration with Other Programs and Agencies

The Illinois State Board of Education encourages school districts to establish collaborative agreements with other state agencies and state programs to avoid service duplication and to maximize the use of available resources.

Almost all instructional programs (246 out of 262), had some kind of collaborative involvement with other agencies and programs. Most programs (216) have developed collaborative arrangements with special education for screening and 167 programs for other special education resources. Collaboration activities with adult education agencies were most often used for parent education (137 programs) and resources (109 programs). Head Start was another program frequently cited for collaborative involvement in an effort to coordinate resources, screening and other activities. There were also collaborative arrangements with universities, the Department of Children and Family Services, Public Health, other health agencies and other non-profit organizations. Table 10 identifies the number of programs involved in collaborative activities with different prekindergarten projects.

Table 10. Number of Projects Collaborating with Other Programs by Activities

Programs	Inservice	Parent Education	Resources	Screening	Other
0 through 2 Program	33	34	80	68	60
Head Start	59	55	116	78	83
Special Education	119	99	167	216	78
Chapter 1	39	44	68	34	29
Child Care Centers	45	30	84	69	60
Adult Education/Literacy	49	137	109	22	42
Other	35	44	73	25	35

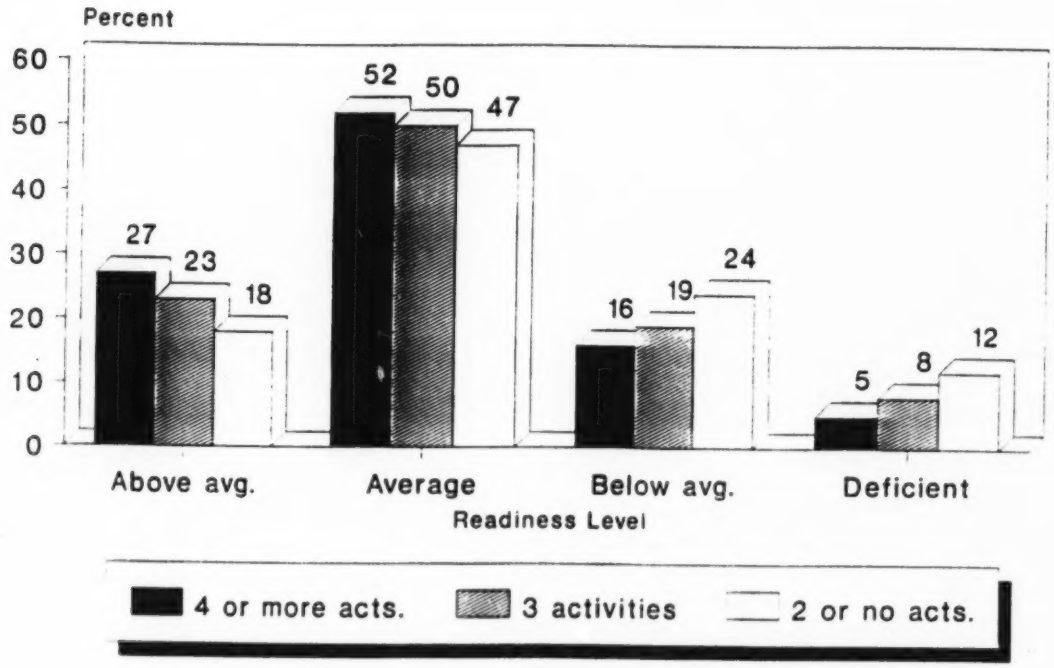
Note: Total number of programs is 292.

Parent Participation and Involvement

Substantial evidence exists to suggest that parents' involvement in their children's education has a major influence on achievement throughout their school years. The Illinois State Board of Education emphasizes that all prekindergarten programs should include parent participation and parent education components as integral parts of the projects.

Figure 7 reveals that almost 79% of the children whose parents participated in four or more parent involvement activities were ranked above average or average in skills related to kindergarten readiness. Seventy-three percent of the children whose parents participated in only three activities were ranked above average or average, and 65% of the children whose parents participated in two or no parent involvement activities were ranked above average or average.

FIGURE 7
READINESS LEVEL
BY PARENT PARTICIPATION



In FY 92, the Illinois State Board of Education contracted with early childhood education consultants to visit and provide recommendations for improving curriculum and program practices for new project sites and those projects which in FY 90 and 91 were not ranked exemplary or at a high performing level. These on-site review processes revealed that 90% of the 184 classroom programs emphasized and strengthened the role of the parent as the child's primary educator. Another 9% of the projects had just started programs which emphasize the parents' role in their child's education. Data from the on-site review process also revealed that:

71% of the projects had a parent resource library,
75% had a children's book lending library,
58% had a toy lending library.

These efforts by districts resulted in almost 67% of the parents participating in three or more parent involvement activities. Only 4% of the parents did not participate in any activities. In FY 92, parent participation data were not available for 10% of the children served.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Illinois Prekindergarten At-Risk Program has experienced significant growth since its initial implementation during 1987. The number of participating projects has increased 162%, and there has been a 443% increase in student participation. The state's commitment to the Prekindergarten Program has continued with a 456% increase in funding from FY 87, while over the same period the cost per child for service provision has increased by 25%.

Program expansion has resulted in services being provided to a broader base of children considered at-risk, i.e., more 3-year-olds. From FY 88 through FY 92, aggregate performance rankings have shown a slight increase in the number of children ranked in the above average and average categories across four academic and behavior categories.

This program addresses issues identified in the Illinois Goals 1, 4, 6, and 8. This program targets 3 to 5 year olds who are at risk of academic failure and helps prepare them to learn and progress successfully through school (Goal 1). Parent involvement and parent education are very important components of this program. All projects are required to establish and implement a strong parent involvement and parent education plan in their proposal (Goal 6).

This program also places emphasis on coordination and collaboration between other programs and agencies to maximize the use of available resources (Goal 8). The Illinois State Board of Education, and Illinois Resource Center, a non-profit organization, have coordinated about 10 workshops and seminars as part of a staff Development Program for staff at Prekindergarten At-Risk and other Early Childhood programs. More than 374 participants enthusiastically responded to these workshops. The Illinois State Board of Education also provided two pilot sessions on Early Childhood Education for School Administrators (Goal 4).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a clear indication that the program has had a positive influence on kindergarten readiness and that performance levels have been sustained in early elementary grades. In FY 92, the program served 22% of a total 130,000, 3 and 4 year olds estimated at risk of academic failure. The state needs to expand the program to make available services to all at-risk children.

- In FY 92, the total fund allocated for the program was $70.6 million dollars, an increase of 12% from FY 91. The program served 29,707 children in FY 92, an increase of 22% from FY 91. The percentage increase in students served is greater than the percentage increase in available program dollars, clearly indicating an efficient use of funds. Further increases in funds would make services available to more children.

- The prekindergarten program data suggest that performance rankings for students from low-income and single-parent families, tend to be lower than their counterparts who come from two-parent families and households with higher incomes. The school-level results also suggest that children from environments conducive to providing risk conditions are in need of services to a greater extent than are students from more stable environments. The prekindergarten at-risk program should provide additional or different services targeted to higher at-risk students and attempt to reduce the gap that currently exists between different populations of participating students.

- The overwhelming evidence of the importance and effects of parental involvement on the children's acadmic performance suggest that the at-risk program should continue emphasizing the role of parents and expand the level of involvement.

- The results of the longitudinal study reveal that the percentage of children in the below average category in reading, mathematics and language, steadily increase as they move into higher grades. The Illinois State Board of Education should emphasize communication and collaboration between the elementary and prekindergarten administrations and teachers. The combined support and supplementary help to at-risk children in their elementary grades is necessary to their continued success in school. This need for collaborative support for sustaining performance levels has been recognized in other states.

The Maryland State Department of Education conducted an evaluation of second and third grade students who had preschool experience (Maryland State Department, 1988). The results suggest that the early learning years may be critical for setting children on a course of school success. In the study, prekindergarten graduates gained their achievement advantage from kindergarten through the beginning of grade 3. Beyond third grade, their edge in performance persisted but remained relatively stable. This points a cautiously optimistic picture. To sustain long term effects of prekindergarten education, the study emphasizes cross-grade staff communication and cooperation. To ensure continuity of learning beyond the prekindergarten year, cooperation between the home and school is necessary.

Many studies sharing positive effects of preschool are based on programs that had certain elements, most notably low staff-child ratios, teachers with early childhood training and extensive parent education/involvement. The studies (Erlbaum, 1990) that show fading away of many post-preschool gains might be due to the fact that education does not stop at age five; subsequent schooling must be up to the task of maintaining and extending the gains that children make.

An Analysis of the midterm effects of the Extended Elementary Education Prekindergarten Program. Maryland State Department of Education. March, 1988.

Erlbaum, Lawrence. 'As the Twig Is Bent' Consortium for Longitudinal Studies, 1983 (cited in Ready to Learn: Early Childhood Education and the Public Schools. Illinois Association of School Boards 1990.)

APPENDIX A

State Board of Education Policy Statement on Early Childhood Education Adopted May 9, 1985 Springfield, Illinois

Early childhood education, for the purposes of this policy, constitutes those educational programs, practices, and services which have as a primary focus the developmental needs of children prior to the time they enter first grade. It will be the policy of the Illinois State Board of Education to seek such support as is necessary to encourage the development of early childhood education programs based on the following considerations:

A) Positive, nurturing experiences in the early years of life are essential in helping children develop intellectually, socially, and emotionally, and future academic success in school is strongly influenced by the character of early experiences.

B) Children identified as being at risk of academic failure can dramatically improve their chances for success through participation in early childhood education programs.

C) Significant developmental differences exist among children, and particular attention should be given to such individual differences in the development of early education programs and services.

D) Meeting the education, health, welfare, and safety needs of young children requires collaboration among various childcare providers.

E) The quality of instructional staff and leadership are especially critical elements in effective early childhood education programs.

Concurrent with Board action, the agency will:

A) Design a comprehensive public awareness program to inform Illinois policymakers, citizens, parents, and educational personnel of the importance of early childhood education, and of the importance of parental involvement in such programs;

B) Identify exemplary prekindergarten and kindergarten programs, widely disseminate findings and coordinate the training necessary to the wide adoption of such programs;

C) Initiate and support efforts to improve the preservice and inservice training of early childhood education teachers, elementary teachers, and principals; and

D) Engage in future study of the issue of parent education in Illinois schools, identify the range and character of needs, explore alternatives, and offer appropriate recommendations to the State Board of Education.

APPENDIX B

The School Code of Illinois

Sec. 2-3.71 Grants for preschool educational programs. (a) The State Board of Education shall implement and administer a grant program consisting of grants to public school districts to conduct preschool educational programs for children ages 3 to 5 which include a parent education component. A public school district which receives grants under this Section may subcontract with a private school, not-for-profit corporation or other governmental agency to conduct a preschool educational program. Except as otherwise provided in paragraphs (2) and (3) of this subsection (a), all teachers of such programs shall ~~either~~ (i) hold early childhood teaching certificates issued under Article 21, ~~or Section 34-83 of this code~~, or (ii) hold elementary certificates issued under Article 21 with kindergarten or preschool experience, or (iii) hold baccalaureate degrees in child development, experience, or (iv) ~~shall~~ meet the requirements for supervising a day care center under the Child Care Act of 1969, as amended.

(2) After the effective date of this Amendatory Act of 1989, any persons newly hired to teach in the program authorized pursuant to this Section shall hold the certification required pursuant to subparagraphs (i), (ii) or (iii) of paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(3) After July 1, 1998, any teacher in the program authorized by this Section shall hold an early childhood teaching certificate.

(b) The State Board of Education shall provide the primary source of funding through appropriations for this program. Such funds shall be distributed for the benefit of children who because of their home and community environment are subject to such language, cultural, economic and like disadvantages that they have been determined as a result of screening procedures to be at risk of academic failure. Such screening procedures shall be based on criteria established by the State Board of Education.

(c) The State Board of Education shall develop and provide evaluation tools, including tests, that school districts may use to evaluate children for school readiness prior to age 5. The State Board of Education shall require school districts to obtain consent from the parents or guardians of children before any evaluations are conducted. The State Board of Education shall encourage local school districts to evaluate the population of preschool children in their districts and provide preschool programs, pursuant to this Section, where appropriate.

d) The State Board of Education shall report to the General Assembly by July 1, 1989, and every 3 years thereafter, on the results and progress of students who were enrolled in preschool educational programs, including an assessment of which programs have been most successful in promoting academic excellence and alleviating academic failure. The State Board of Education shall assess the academic progress of all students who have been enrolled in preschool educational programs.

APPENDIX C

Table 11. Assessment of Prekindergarten Children in Elementary Grades in FY 92

	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Deficient
Reading				
Kindergarten	25%	51%	20%	4%
First Grade	26%	47%	21%	6%
Second Grade	24%	49%	22%	5%
Third Grade	20%	51%	24%	5%
Fourth Grade	21%	51%	25%	3%
Mathematics				
Kindergarten	25%	56%	16%	3%
First Grade	28%	53%	15%	4%
Second Grade	25%	56%	16%	3%
Third Grade	21%	55%	19%	4%
Fourth Grade	22%	53%	21%	4%
Language				
Kindergarten	24%	57%	17%	2%
First Grade	23%	55%	18%	4%
Second Grade	22%	55%	20%	3%
Third Grade	18%	57%	22%	3%
Fourth Grade	19%	57%	21%	3%
Behavior				
Kindergarten	31%	52%	14%	3%
First Grade	31%	50%	15%	4%
Second Grade	31%	50%	15%	4%
Third Grade	32%	48%	15%	5%
Fourth Grade	34%	46%	15%	5%

Kindergarten n = 10,203, First Grade n = 7,664
Second Grade n = 4,281, Third Grade n = 2,777
Fourth Grade n = 1,701

Table 12. FY 92 FINANCIAL SUMMARY
Prekindergarten At-Risk Program

SOURCES OF FUNDS:

$70,429,107	**State Prekindergarten Fund**
$ 88,670	**Other State Educational Funds**
$ 268,043	**Other Sources (Federal Funds, Foundation Funds, etc.)**
$ 1,593,816	**Local Sources, Direct Contribution**
$ 3,204,661	**Local Sources, In-Kind Contribution**
$75,584,297	**TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDS**

LINE	Acct. No. (1)		EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS (2)	TOTAL STATE FUND EXPENDITURE (3)	TOTAL DIRECT EXPENDITURE (OTHER FUND) (4)	IN-KIND EXPENDITURE (5)	TOTAL EXPENDITURE (6)
01		A	Salaries and Fringe Benefits	39,069,209	694,865	69,891	39,833,965
02	Instr.	B	Instructional Materials	2,160,457	25,562	18,778	2,204,797
03	100	C	Instructional Equipment	1,610,577	15,626	19,918	1,646,122
04		D	Teaching Supplies and All Other Expenses for Instruction	821,833	11,271	20,053	853,157
05	211		Attendance Services	798,681	7,623	218,205	1,024,508
06	212		Guidance Services	1,899,530	46,237	27,820	1,973,587
07	213		Health Services	1,157,929	29,254	96,879	1,284,062
08	214		Psychological Services	267,589	624	69,438	337,651
09	215		Speech and Audio Pathology Services	1,261,128	106,819	209,188	1,577,134
10	221		Improvement of Instruction	2,982,303	14,715	41,534	3,038,552
11	222	A	Media Educational Materials	29,361	26	13,569	42,956
12		B	Media Educational Equipment	13,507	100	6,605	20,212
13	230		General Administration	1,810,735	82,340	459,833	2,352,908
14	240		School Administration	-	-	-	-
15	251/ 252		Business/Fiscal Services	131,524	5,770	126,870	264,164
16	253		Construction and Remodeling	-	13,059	68,754	81,813
17	254		Operation and Maintenance	2,565,653	182,083	1,189,112	3,936,849
18	255		Pupil Transportation	3,795,196	610,257	415,635	4,821,088
19	256		Food Services	687,670	24,216	39,489	751,375
20	257		Internal Services	41,577	-	13,738	55,315
21	260		Central Services	464,640	7,000	15,092	486,732
22	290		Supporting Services - Other	304,808	18,479	38,204	361,491
23	300		Community Services	4,943,597	54,345	22,055	5,019,997
24	410		Payments to Other Governmental Units	3,611,602	260	4,000	3,615,862
25	TOTAL EXPENDITURES			70,429,106	1,950,529	3,204,661	
27	TOTAL PROJECT EXPENDITURES						75,584,297

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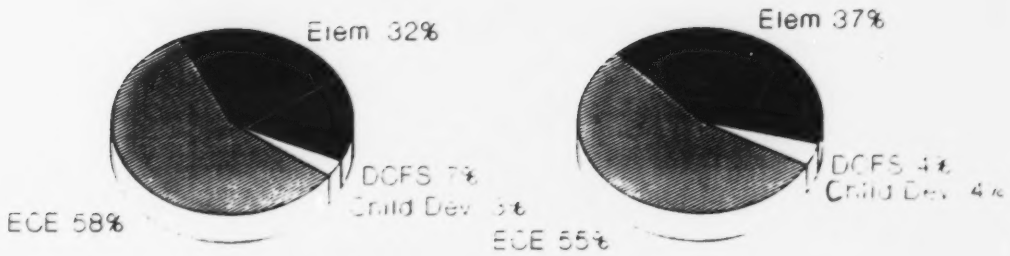
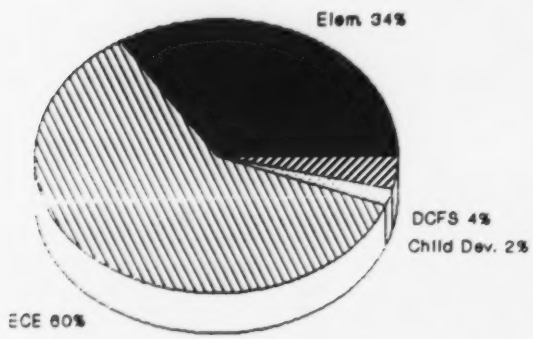
FIGURE 8
FTE Teachers by Certifications



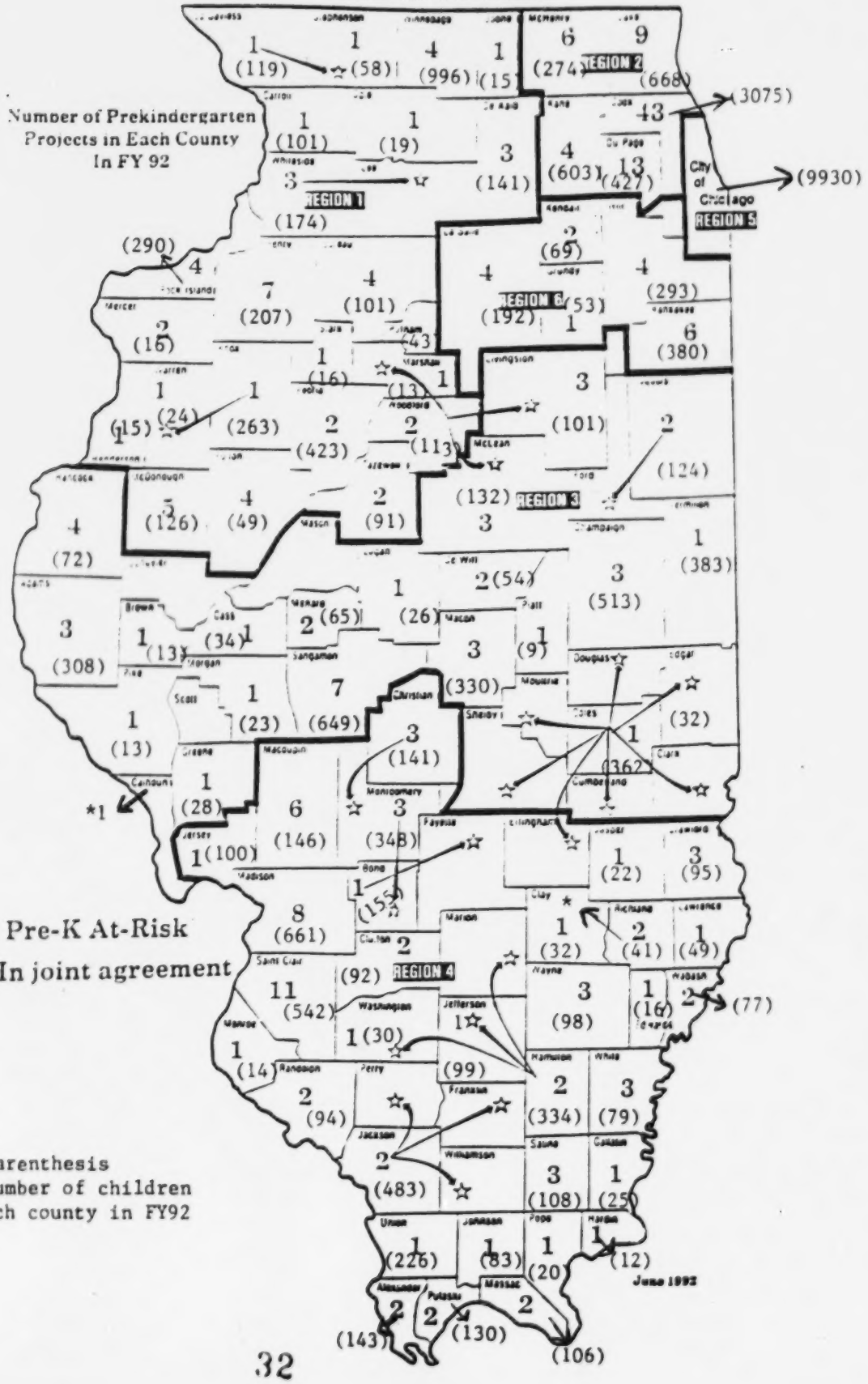
FTE FY 90 = 671.3 FTE FY 91 = 831.2



FTE FY 92 = FTE 985.0

FIGURE 9

Pre-K At-Risk



APPENDIX D

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WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: THE CHALLENGE AND THE VISION

VISION STATEMENT

As we approach the 21st century, there is broad-based agreement that the education we provide for our children will determine America's future role in the community of nations, the character of our society, and the quality of our individual lives. Thus, education has become the most important responsibility of our nation and our state, with an imperative for bold new directions and renewed commitments.

To meet the global challenges this responsibility presents, the State of Illinois will provide the leadership necessary to guarantee access to a system of high-quality public education. This system will develop in all students the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes that will enable all residents to lead productive and fulfilling lives in a complex and changing society. All students will be provided appropriate and adequate opportunities to learn to:

- communicate with words, numbers, visual images, symbols and sounds;
- think analytically and creatively, and be able to solve problems to meet personal, social and academic needs;
- develop physical and emotional well-being;
- contribute as citizens in local, state, national and global communities;
- work independently and cooperatively in groups;
- understand and appreciate the diversity of our world and the interdependence of its peoples;
- contribute to the economic well-being of society; and
- continue to learn throughout their lives.

MISSION STATEMENT

The State Board of Education believes that the current educational system is not meeting the needs of the people of Illinois. Substantial change is needed to fulfill this responsibility. The State Board of Education will provide the leadership necessary to begin this process of change by committing to the following goals.

ILLINOIS GOALS

1. Each Illinois public school student will exhibit mastery of the learner outcomes defined in the State Goals for Learning, demonstrate the ability to solve problems and perform tasks requiring higher-order thinking skills, and be prepared to succeed in our diverse society and the global work force.

2. All people of Illinois will be literate, lifelong learners who are knowledgeable about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and able to contribute to the social and economic well-being of our diverse, global society.

3. All Illinois public school students will be served by an education delivery system which focuses on student outcomes; promotes maximum flexibility for shared decision making at the local level; and has an accountability process which includes rewards, interventions and assistance for schools.

4. All Illinois public school students will have access to schools and classrooms with highly qualified and effective professionals who ensure that students achieve high levels of learning.

5. All Illinois public school students will attend schools which effectively use technology as a resource to support student learning and improve operational efficiency.

6. All Illinois public school students will attend schools which actively develop the support, involvement and commitment of their community by the establishment of partnerships and/or linkages to ensure the success of all students.

7. Every Illinois public school student will attend a school that is supported by an adequate, equitable, stable and predictable system of finance.

8. Each child in Illinois will receive the support services necessary to enter the public school system ready to learn and progress successfully through school. The public school system will serve as a leader in collaborative efforts among private and public agencies so that comprehensive and coordinated health, human and social services reach children and their families.

Developed by citizens of Illinois through a process supported by the Governor, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Business Roundtable
Adopted as a centerpiece for school improvement efforts.

Printed by the authority of the State of Illinois.

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
100 North First Street, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001

Michael W. Skarr, *Chairperson*
Robert Leininger, *State Superintendent*

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